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ABSTRACT

In the ideal community college governance system, the board of trustees, the chancellor or president, and his/her immediate staff are primarily concerned with goal-setting and evaluation, not with management activities. Middle management is concerned with reaching the goals and with those activities which move the institution toward those goals. Institutional research is responsible for evaluation: to document movement toward goal achievement, and to provide data for subsequent decision-making. A management model of this type is best driven by an MBO (Management by Objectives) system, requiring the development of annual management objectives that are consistent with annual priorities and a system-wide master plan. The Metropolitan Community College District (MCCD), a multicampus district in Kansas City, Missouri, has established such an organizational pattern; it is similar to a federal system where a territorially diversified pattern calls for two levels of government--one to deal with the common, the other to deal with the territorially diverse. This report describes the functions and decision-making responsibilities at various administrative levels, with an emphasis on the key role of institutional research. (DC)

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AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

ON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN THE 80'S

presented by

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Chancellor
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at the

Conference on Institutional Research in Community Colleges
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey
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I am pleased to be here today among many of my friends and former colleagues.

I am reminded of the plight of the conventional institutional researcher when I think of the story told many years ago by one Patrick Hooley when he was asked what America had done for the working man:

"Well," he said, "when I first arrived in America, a greenhorn from the Ould Sod, the only job of work I could get was with the White Wings, New York City's street cleaning department. Then it was 'Hooley, do this; Hooley, do that.' And after a bit, because I'd worked hard and done my job well, someone asked me to run for boss of the local union. I did that, and I was elected. Then it was 'Mister Hooley, sir'--and sometimes 'Mister Hooley darlin'.'

"A few years later I was asked to run for alderman--which I did and was elected. Then it was 'Honorable Mister Hooley.' And pretty soon I was made chairman of the Board of Aldermen, and then, of course, they called me 'Mister

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President.' But it wasn't until a visit to the Ould Sod once again that I realized how America had elevated the working man.

"It was a beautiful Sunday morning and, with my handsome young niece on my arm, I mounted the marble steps of the Cathedral. As I pushed open the fine wooden doors and stepped inside, the choir began to sing, 'Hooley, Hooley, Hooley . . . '

"That's what America has done for the working man!"

In order for us to have a perspective on institutional research in the 1980's, we must first determine where institutional research fits into a college's governance and management systems. Like Hooley, the institutional researcher in the modern community college may have an unreal impression of his importance or how he is perceived by his peers. For whether we like it or not, the best data in the world, circulated nationally, will go unused if it is not merged with the decision-making process in a "politically astute way."

My purpose today, then, is to share with you: (1) a management system based on goal-setting and evaluation which utilizes institutional research (not as an end, but rather as the means to an end) in institutional problem solving; (2) a system of organizational relationships in which institutional research and planning can become the decisive factor in effective governance.

But before sharing with you my brief paper, I'd like to make a few personal comments with respect to the governance and management of multi-unit community college districts.

Prior to leaving this area (New Jersey) three years ago, I would frequently hear the question asked: Is New York governable? I guess we now know the answer

to that question. Those of us in multi-college districts now frequently raise that question with respect to our own districts.

Since moving to Kansas City, I've had occasion to ask myself: How can anyone govern in a rational manner so complex an empire as this one: A sixty-year-old system serving the 1 million plus residents of the four Missouri counties of metropolitan Kansas City through four colleges -- three with formal campuses: Penn Valley Community College, located near the District offices in midtown Kansas City; Longview Community College, 20 miles to the south; and Maple Woods Community College, 20 miles to the north -- and a fourth college beyond walls, Pioneer Community College, that utilizes sites throughout the four-county area. These four colleges -- each with its own name, its own president, its own distinctive characteristics, its own hallmark, enroll more than 25,000 students.

The challenge of managing this dynamic and complex system of colleges has frankly rekindled my interest in institutional research and planning.

Why? Because in my judgment management control must exist in all organizations if they are to achieve their mission. The question, then, is do we want the control point to be at the management activity level or at the outcomes level? Are we interested in controlling activities or results?

This deliberation has led to the concept of accountability. And accountability implies the setting of goals and evaluation of outcomes and the need for data to set and measure them.

Governance, according to John D. Millet, is both a structure and a process that characterizes every social unit, implicitly or explicitly. In educational institutions, a "dual structure" usually exists: one for decision-making about the

administrative or institutional affairs of a college, and another for the academic or instructional affairs. In the first instance, the board of trustees, the president, and the administrative staff form the structure preoccupied with institutional affairs; in the second instance, it is the faculty that are preoccupied with instructional objectives, instructional procedures, faculty selection and promotion, student academic performance, and the fulfillment of degree requirements.

These two structures--institutional and instructional--have historically always been in conflict, though the need for such conflict remains obscure. However, we generally attempt to avoid the conflict through a form of governance called the community governance model which attempts to bring together in one body representatives of the faculty, staff, students, and administration.

This model has met with limited success, and is highly suspect in an environment of collective bargaining. (Some would say it leads to collective bargaining.) For these reasons, there may be an emergence of a new kind of institutional leadership which will require much more extensive information sharing, more lengthy consultation, and more emphasis on goal setting and the measurement of results or outcomes of the decision process.

Peter Drucker, in his book, The Age of Discontinuity, stresses the importance of information sharing and goal setting and evaluation to organizational health:

> The members of organizations, whether employees or students, should be expected to take the largest possible responsibility for managing the community life of their institutions. A great deal of what managements are doing today is not related to performance and function. Why management should run the plant cafeteria, for instance, or be concerned with maintaining student discipline, is not very clear. And there are many other areas where community self-government can and should take over.

> Altogether a wise management does not speak of "management prerogatives." It does not even think of them. It limits itself to the spheres of direct relevance to its central task. Everything else it tries to unload. Wherever even serious malfunction would not endanger the attainment of the organization's objective--student discipline is an example--the wise executive says, "This is your job."
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> It is also highly desirable to bring these "members" of organization as far as possible into the decision-making process. Otherwise they cannot acquire any understanding of the realities of their institution. . . Without such understanding organization is always endangered. And we know that participation in the actual decision-making process is the only way to acquire the rudiments of understanding. . .
>
> But in the areas that directly affect standards, performance, and results of the institution, the members cannot take over. There, the standards, the performance, and the results must rule them. . .

Organizational leadership, then, according to Drucker, requires participation by members of the organization for information sharing purposes, but the authority to set goals and standards and to control the means of evaluation must not be delegated downward by top management.

These words have important implications for institutional research. If we are going to place more emphasis on information sharing, our information must be timely and accurate. And, if we are going to set goals and evaluate results, then we must not only know what results we are seeking; but how to measure the outcomes. These concerns lead me to suggest a management model for the 1980's which makes institutional research the keystone in the decision-making process.

Simplistically, the management model I propose is that we make decisions on the basis of the evaluations of predetermined, mutually agreed to goals. That is, the board of trustees, the chancellor or president and his or her immediate staff should be primarily concerned with goal setting and evaluation, not management

activities: Where do we want to go? (What are our goals and objectives?) And did we get there? (How well are we accomplishing our goals and objectives?) Middle management should be concerned with reaching the goals and those activities which move them toward those goals, and institutional research should provide the data and information to set the goals and then be responsible for measuring whether the goals have been met--that is, evaluation of how well the institution has done.

A management model of this type is best driven by an MBO system, requiring the development of annual management objectives that are consistent with annual priorities and a system-wide master plan.

An MBO system distinguishes between conformity and freedom--conformity to goals and objectives that have been agreed upon in advance, but freedom in choosing the means for achieving those objectives.

Let's focus on the goal setting process for a moment. It is essential for colleges to articulate their mission, goals and objectives not only to become a part of a management system, but also:

. . . to give direction to present and future work

. . . to provide an ideology that can nurture internal cooperation, communication, and trust

. . . to enable appraisal of the institution as a means-end system, and

. . . to afford a basis for public understanding and support.

As I've suggested, institutional goal determination also involves the establishment of priorities. As Peterson has said, "an institution's 'goal structure'--its rank-ordering of goals--can be said to be determined when some level of consensus has been reached through a process that is democratic and participatory." Similarly,

Schoor pointed out that the goal determination process must be regarded universally throughout the district as fair if the resulting goal structure is to have legitimacy; i.e., if it is to be accepted as appropriate in the college community.

Institutional goals are best conceived of in terms of outcome goals and support goals. Outcome goals are the ends the colleges seek to realize and thus express the desired educational productivity.

Support goals are the goals, which, when attained, facilitate reaching the outcome goals. They have to do with instructional resources, educational environment, research and development, etc. Accomplishment of support goals is intended to optimize the previously identified outcome goals.

Once outcome goals and support goals are determined, a necessary next task is to translate these conceptions into precise, measurable program objectives. All of which takes good institutional research.

The other half of this equation is evaluation. Evaluation has at least two desired outcomes: (1) to document movement toward objective achievement; and (2) to provide data for subsequent decision making.

However, it is essential that the evaluation have relevance to system participants. That is, the activities carried out in the evaluation must be seen as relevant among those participants to whom the evaluation applies. Thus, if the participants feel ownership and benefit from evaluative activity, there will be a much lower probability that evaluation objectives, methods, and procedures will be questioned as to results and value. This is critical to a management model based on goal setting and evaluation.

A second major objective of the evaluation process is to document the extent to which objectives are achieved. Wherever an inquiry is made, evaluation functions are to provide evidence of the level at which objectives are achieved. From these data, decisions can then be made.

Within the Metropolitan Community Colleges we have organized ourselves into a pattern which we think supports the concept of leadership through the setting of goals and the subsequent evaluations of goal achievement.

While we are a multi-college district with a central chancellor's office and somewhat autonomous colleges, what I am about to describe can work just as well in a single college if the president's office and staff are put in the same context as a "district office" in a multi-college system.

The Metropolitan Community Colleges emphasize functional management based on the concept of decision making relating to the differentiation of functions between the colleges and the Chancellor's office.

It is the district's responsibility to provide an overall, comprehensive program of education and services suitable for all segments of the district population and to assure that these offerings are effective in meeting individual and community needs. The colleges, on the other hand, have the responsibility of developing and operating all educational programs and services in their service areas.

Accordingly, decisions are made at the district level when: (a) the proposed action or implied result of the decision requires either the Board's or the Chancellor's approval; (b) the decision requires total District resources to implement; (c) the decision is related to the legal responsibilities of the District; (d) the decision

would yield efficiencies through system-wide implementation (e.g., single computer). All other decisions are made at the college level.

The key responsibilities for each management element in operating the district are:

For the Chancellor (as chief executive officer of the Board)

1. Goal setting for the district, in accordance with the ten-year master plan;
2. Evaluation of all programs and services;
3. Development of new programs and services (district-wide);
4. Community and governmental relations (district-wide);
5. Certain centralized support services for the consortium of colleges;
6. Establishment of district-wide performance standards and systems in areas such as plant operations and maintenance, security and safety, financial aids, information systems, program review process, internal audits and communications systems.

For each President

1. The operation of all educational programs and services;
2. Goal setting for the college;
3. Evaluation of the teaching/learning process;
4. Support services for college departments.

There are similarities between our organization pattern and a federal system, where a territorially diversified pattern calls for two levels of government--one to deal with the common, the other with the territorially diverse. Perhaps our

greatest challenge lies in our ability to foster diversity, creativity, and initiative on the part of our local colleges and, at the same time, to guarantee excellence of programs and services offered by each college in a cost-effective manner without unnecessary duplication of effort. These responsibilities welded together in a process of accountability, decision making, evaluation and adequate staff support should provide the district with effective management for the future.

Where do we fit institutional research into this system? At the district level we have three support divisions. One concerned with fiscal and personnel, one concerned with public affairs, and one concerned with goal setting and evaluation. These divisions are headed by vice chancellors who report to me. The divisions are staff oriented and have no line authority over the colleges.

The division which is concerned with goal setting and evaluation is also responsible for our central computer services, the development of management systems, curriculum planning and coordination, and long-range planning. Research and analysis is also a part of the division and serves in a supportive role to all other functions of the division. All data reporting about the district, both internal and external, flows through this office. Research and analysis program audits and evaluation, base data for goal setting, position papers, projections, and master planning all are integral to the mission of research and analysis in our system.

The fundamental role of this goal setting and evaluation division is to first, provide management with the data, the alternatives, the systems and standards and the tools necessary for effective decision making; second, to monitor the results in terms of the achievement of the goals set forth; and, third, to master plan for the future in all areas of district activities.

This division, then, which embodies institutional research, has a tremendous responsibility and impact on our district. We feel it is the link which makes effective management by goal setting and evaluation possible. The status of this division has grown and its acceptance has been fostered throughout the district because the data it reports, the planning it does, the evaluation it makes, the recommendations it proposes, and the systems it develops are used. No other one thing is more important in the management scheme I have just described. You cannot organize in one manner and operate in another.

Even though you are not organized in the manner we are, or may never be, there still are critical questions which need to be answered now and into the 1980's to help support the decision making process at your college. For example:

How many of you can supply your president with cost effective data for the programs offered at your institution?

How many of you can supply your president with accurate historical data on the operational and financial aspects of your federally assisted programs?

How many of your institutions have a specific set of measurable objectives?

How many of you have a usable master plan for the future?

How many of you have an evaluation plan to measure your college's effectiveness in meeting its mission?

Every conference I attend, every educational publication I read, exposes the virtues of accountability, cost effectiveness, simulation models, long-term legislative agreements and performance indices and encourages educational administrators to think in these terms.

If we're not concerned with them, then nobody is. Yet if we are, are they used? The responsibility is shared--the institutional research must be done in a timely and accurate manner, then other administrators and I must use the products you have generated. If not, you'll fall into disuse and I'll be an ineffective manager.

I guess what I am saying is that I believe we have the tools, the computer models, and the concepts to be able to measure the progress and process of our past decisions and to provide ourselves with decision making data for the future. However, I question whether we are making adequate use of these tools in today's problem solving and managerial techniques. Therefore, I am saying to you today that one of the most important things we must have in the 1980's is a full complement of management tools to supplement the decision making process and the commitment to use them.

Now, that profound statement should sound so stale to you that you should doubt that someone is actually saying it again. However, let me tell you why I am saying it again. If this were August, 1966, rather than August, 1976, and we were attempting to look at the 1970's, how many of us would have been able to identify the following problems we now face in the 1970's?

a. declining full-time enrollments;

b. emergence of "new students";

c. average age of 30;

d. resistant legislative bodies;

e. severe budget constraints;

f. faculty layoffs;

g. collective bargaining;

h. high unemployment;

i. increased interest in vocational technical

I could go on with the litany of education problems we are facing, but were not predicted, but it is not necessary. What is necessary is for all of us to see that accurate data and effective long-range planning is crucial to decision making. Therefore, I say to you, develop the management tools which will carry you into the 1980's. If the tools which have been developed (HEGIS and NCHEMS) work, use them. If they don't work, dispose of them and develop tools which will work. Always be cognizant of the fact that you are in a dynamic environment. We are the innovators of change, so allow the tools to be flexible in order to accommodate change.

Finally, we often promote the concept of institutional research and planning services for decision making; yet we end up making those decisions based on "our years of experience." This technique of management always deals an effective death blow to research and planning services. If we are to organize for the 1980's to avoid decision making based on what Simon has called "little more than ambiguous and mutually contradictory proverbs," the need for institutional research to play a strong role is evident. And it clearly must play a decisive role in organizational structures based on goal setting and evaluation.

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